

Normalize ORIGAMI / Cat KURUMI

Spirit No.3

Uniform-Maid dress Type

橘公司

The author  
Koushi Tachibana

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# Kurumi Cat~

Blue sky, white clouds and a warm climate.

A typical hot summer environment just like it was from a picture. The blinding sunlight shone everywhere, mercilessly baking the asphalt road. The impatient cries of the cicadas added some merriment to the otherwise peaceful residential district.

At the center of the road, Kurumi was all alone, happily humming a tune whilst taking a slow stroll.

She was a girl with long, dark colored hair tied into two shoulder-length bunches. Amidst the summer heat where one would simply perspire just by standing, even though Kurumi wore a long-sleeved sweater and a plain long skirt, not a drop of perspiration could be seen. Along with her beauty that seemed to consume the surrounding air, if one stopped to look at her, she could probably be mistaken for a intricately designed doll.

"Fufu, I guess I've made some progress for now."

Kurumi softly murmured with a cheerful tone, licking her lips with the tip of her tongue.

The boy with the power of the Spirits in his body. Kurumi had been suspicious about it when she first witnessed it, but that ability truly existed.

If she were to consume him, Kurumi would then be able to obtain the power of three Spirits. Even if she used Yod Bet[The Twelfth Bullet], she would have a large reserve of Spirit energy left over.

"Fufu.....But, Shidou-san has to be saved for last."

Saying that, Kurumi raised her left hand, opening and closing it a few times.

The hand that had been lost, and regenerated through the effects of Dalet[The Fourth Bullet].

At that moment.

With a slight thump, Kurumi felt a slight impact at her chest, a tiny wail could be heard from in front of her.

"Oh?"

Lowering her gaze, she noticed a girl that looked to be approximately in fourth grade sitting on her behind. It seemed that she had ran straight into Kurumi.

"Oh my, I'm really sorry."

Kurumi said as she extended her hand. The girl fidgeted for a while, before timidly holding Kurumi's hand.

Just like that, Kurumi pulled the young girl to her feet, lightly dusting her knees. The girl hastily bowed her head in apology.

"U-um.....I'm sorry. It's because I was in a hurry....."

"It's alright. Since I was thinking of something at the time, I'm to blame as well."

As she spoke, Kurumi looked at the girl. Her clothes were light and cool, completely different from Kurumi's, yet beads of sweat could be seen on her forehead.

Kurumi understood, so the young girl wasn't lying when she said she was in a hurry.

"S-sorry, I....."

"Ahhh, you don't have to worry about this. Weren't you in a hurry?"

"Really.....I'm really sorry."

The girl deeply bowed once more and got ready to hurry off once more.

However, she stopped in her tracks as though recalling something, withdrew something that looks like a flyer from her bag and handed it to Kurumi.

"U-um.....please take this....."

"This is?"

Kurumi lowered her head to look at the piece of paper.

On the flyer's surface, the picture of a calico cat with a red collar was printed along with a request to look for the cat as well as a map of the surrounding area and contact details.

"I'm sorry.....If you have seen it then.....Please..."

"Haa....."

Kurumi replied listlessly. The young girl lowered her head and ran off, tripping on the uneven road in the end—before finally regaining her balance and narrowly avoiding falling down. However, she still gave the impression that she would run into someone again once more.

"Not a missing person but a missing cat.....huh."

Kurumi sighed, looking at the flyer once more—before folding it and putting it in her pocket.

"Even though I sympathize with her.....But I simply do not have the time to waste on such things."

With that, Kurumi started walking down the path while trying to put it behind her.

That's right, now's not the right time and place to think about these issues.

Kurumi still has not found a way to do what she has to do, yet time was limited. A task such as looking for a lost cat would waste precious time, time that Kurumi simply could not waste.

"....."

However.

Kurumi wordlessly stopped walking, retrieving that piece of paper once more and sighed.

"Then again, [We] have not had anything to do since replenishing our numbers."

After mumbling such words she started to walk once more, this time into a small alley.

"Since I'm not really too confident in using them in reconnaissance and actual combat.....Perhaps it is necessary to train them a little first."

Walking right into the darkest part of the pitch-black alley, Kurumi struck her heel against the floor once.

In response, the shadow under Kurumi's feet instantly expanded in size, filling up the entire alley.



After that, Kurumi snapped her fingers, pale, white hands sprouted out from the expanded shadows on the walls and ground at once—the faces of countless girls emerged.

Twintails of uneven length, clock-shaped left eyes. That's right, even though their hairstyles and outfit were different, but the girls who had appeared from the shadows all has the same face as Kurumi.

"[Us]."

As Kurumi spoke, the [Kurumis] sensed her intentions, swiftly departing from the alley in-between giggles, some leapt onto the roofs while others submerged into the shadows once more—the girls spread themselves across the street with haste.

"Ah——.....So it's already summer, huh."

Shidou, who was walking down the streets under the hot sun, mumbled to himself, stretching casually as he did so.

The time was currently one-thirty in the afternoon. As it was a school holiday today, Shidou had intended to go to the shopping district as soon as possible to finish grocery shopping.....But the sunlight was far harsher than he had expected. Shidou couldn't help but think that it might have been a better idea if he had waited for the sun to go down a little before stepping out of the house.

"Hm, what is it shidou, are you not feeling well?"

At this moment, the girl who had been walking in front of Shidou, skipped to his side and inquired.

Dusk-coloured hair, crystal pupils that did not seem to be natural, she was a girl that one would remember forever with just a single glance.

Right now, the girl was wearing light summer clothes, the excitable atmosphere caused by her natural actions had already dispelled that mysterious feeling that surrounded her.

Yatogami Tohka. She was Shidou's classmate as well as his neighbor. Tohka was also—one of the Spirits who had her powers sealed by Shidou.

Today, upon noticing that Shidou was going to buy groceries, she immediately yelled "Me too! Me too!", before swiftly getting ready and tagged along.

"Haha.....You're really energetic today, Tohka."

"Yeah! That's because I just ate lunch!"

Saying that, Tohka puffed out her chest. Shidou made a forced smile as he chased after the prancing Tohka.

"Hm?"

Tohka who had been walking ahead of Shidou suddenly stopped, abruptly squatting down to peer under the bottom of a car.

"Hm? What are you doing, Tohka?"

"Uuh....."

As Shidou walked closer, Tohka reached her hand out under the car. A while later, she retrieved a single cat from beneath the car.

"A cat?"

Shidou widened his eyes. It was a calico cat who was wearing a red collar. Due to being suddenly moved to a bright place from a dark one. The cat squinted its eyes, seemingly due to the bright sunlight.

"I guess we woke it up while it was sleeping.....Might as well, it could have been in danger if we left it below the car."

Shidou stated, Tohka shook her head.

"That's not it, look over here, shidou."

Saying that, Tohka turned the calico cat that she was carrying towards Shidou.

A trail of blood could be clearly seen from the cat's left hind leg.

"Ah.....It got injured."

"That's right, it's best if we get it treated soon."

"Yeah——.....Although we have some first aid equipment at home, but I think it might be for the best if we consult an expert on this.....Alright, we're going to alter our route a little, let us go to the veterinary and have them take a look."

"Yes!"

Tohka loudly cried out. The cat meowed as though it was replying.

"Oooh, you can understand our words too?"

"No no, how could that be.....But, if it is wearing a collar then it means that it's being raised by someone right? And it seems that it is used to being around humans. It would be the right thing to do to search for its owner——"

Shidou said, subconsciously looking over his shoulder.

For some reason, he felt as though someone was watching him.

"Hm? What's the matter shidou?"

"Eh.....There seem to be....."

Looking around as he spoke, he did not find anything suspicious.

Shidou scratched his cheek, his head inclining slightly to one side.

"No, its nothing. Let's go."

"Okay!"

Tohka enthusiastically replied.

".....Oh my, oh my, oh my."

Kurumi, who had been observing from an alley, frowned slightly.

In the short period of time where she received the report from one of her clones that the calico cat has been spotted and immediately rushed over to the location, the situation has somehow gotten troublesome.....

In Kurumi's sights, was the calico cat that was in the arms of a beautiful girl who was walking with a gentle-looking youth.

They were people that Kurumi knew. That's right.....It was Yatogami Tohka and Itsuka Shidou .

"This really is.....becoming troublesome."

Kurumi placed her hand under her chin as she started to think. The cat that she was targeting just had to be picked up by her prey and his Spirit bodyguard.

In truth, this wasn't a situation that she had hoped for.

Of course, Kurumi's Zafkiel<Emperor of Time> is the strongest Angel. There's no reason to be afraid of Tohka whose powers have been sealed by Shidou.....But things are not that simple.

If she were to reveal herself in front of the two.....just what should she say to them?

"Hand over that cat?" No, even if she asked directly, it is unlikely that the two would obediently do as she request. If she were to be questioned regarding her motive for targeting the cat, then she would be at a loss for words.

"What should we do?"

As Kurumi pondered, a voice sounded out beside her—a voice that was completely identical to Kurumi's. The clone who had first noticed the cat looked at Kurumi as she poked out from the shadows of the walls.

Kurumi made a slight snort, glanced at the flyer for the missing cat before looking at Shidou and Tohka once more.

"Methods are aplenty. I don't have to hand over the cat to that child personally. If that's the case, it would be sufficient if I let Shidou-san and Tohka-san notice."

Kurumi spoke to herself whilst raising the hand that was holding the flyer.

Shidou and Tohka altered their original plans to go to the shopping district, moving towards the direction of the veterinary instead.

Looking at the injury of the cat, even though it's not fatal, but leaving it alone may cause it to worsen or even trigger an infection. So they are currently moving quickly whilst trying to reduce the vibrations from their steps.

"Hey, shidou. Where can we find the veterinary?"

Tohka, who was using one hand to shield the cat she was carrying from the glare of the sunlight, asked Shidou. Shidou looked up as though in thought before replying.

"If I recall correctly we should walk straight down this path, we should be able to see it once we take a left turn at where the main road ends. I usually don't go to the veterinarian so it's a little vague."

"Hm.....So I see, I'll remember it."

"Eh?"

"If I ever see another animal that's injured like this guy, I have to get ready to bring them to the veterinarian just like this. It's a great thing that shidou is with me today, I wouldn't know what to do if I were to be by myself. I've realized once again how immature I am."

"Haha, that's true. But then again, I wouldn't have noticed the cat if Tohka wasn't with me right?"

After hearing Shidou say that, Tohka's expression brightened.

"Hehe, what a lucky cat you are. To be found by shidou and me."

Tohka laughed, scratching the cat by the throat. The cat mewed in comfort, wriggling its body as though asking for more.

"Uu, what's the matter, you cute thing, is it here?"

Probably urged on by its reaction, Tohka happily continued to play with the cat. The cat mewed one more, licking Tohka's fingers.

"Oooh.....! s-shidou! What should we do after bringing this guy to the veterinarian? Can we keep it?"

"Eh? No, it is wearing a collar after all, we should search for its owner."

"U, ugh.....Is that so. B-but, if we couldn't find the owner....."

"Well, if it happens....."

Shidou spoke, noticing that Tohka was looking at him with a very serious face. Sweat appeared on Shidou's face, he continued.

"......When that happens you can ask Kotori to check if it is okay to raise a pet in your room."

"Oh.....Ooooh!"

After Shidou said that, Tohka's eyes brilliantly shone, she tightly hugged the cat.

"Hey, you'll hurt it....."

At that moment, Shidou's brow twitched.

There seemed to be a piece of paper stuck on the wall in front of Shidou and Tohka.

For a moment it seemed to be an election notice, but that wasn't right, a person's face was not printed there, but a cat's——

"! shidou! Come and look! It's so bouncy!"

"Hm?"

Shidou had originally wanted to take a closer look at the notice, Tohka, who was at his side, suddenly called out to him, causing him to be distracted.

He saw Tohka excitedly pressing the cat's paw pads (the uninjured front paws of course).

"A-amazing, shidou! what is this!"

"Ahh, those are called paw pads. They grow on the paws of dogs and cats."

"Paw pads.....?"

Tohka tilted her head slightly to a side, widening her eyes as though realizing something.

"Balls of.....meat. Don't tell me, meatballs are made from these!?"[4A 1]

"That's not right. Even though it certainly sounds the same if you take the literal English meaning, but that's not it at all."

"Uh, so that's how it is.....Alright, its decided! Your name shall be 'Nikukyuu'!"

Tohka cried out, nodding her head in affirmation.

"Gah, hey... We should be looking for the owner first. Isn't this putting the cart before the horse?"

"That's not the case. Even if we're looking for its owner, wouldn't this guy feel troubled without a name. Furthermore.....just like how Shidou gave me a name, I'd like to give this cat here a name too."

"Nn.....Is that so."

Shidou nodded, letting out a small "Ah" while doing so.

Whilst conversing with each other, Shidou and Tohka had passed by the aforementioned notice.

"Well, forget it."

Although he did not mind.....But there wasn't a need to turn around and check, their priority right now would be to send the cat to the veterinarian first. Shidou scratched his head as he continued walking towards the veterinary with Tohka.

"....."

Shidou and Tohka had already walked away.

Kurumi appeared from the shadows of the wall, moodily taking down the paper that was stuck to the wall.

That's right. Kurumi had predicted Shidou and Tohka's route, pasting the notice of the missing cat at a location that would be easily noticed.

As long as that calico cat was returned to that young girl, it would be fine even if the task was not done personally by Kurumi. In other words, that would have been a better situation.

Ideally, if Shidou had noticed the existence of the notice, he would have immediately called the number written on the notice. If that happened then everything would be solved and everyone would be happy.

However what happened was, that her plan did not go as smoothly as expected. Tohka had interrupted at a crucial moment, splendidly causing Shidou to overlook that notice.

"Tch.....And I almost succeeded too. Tohka-san really did something unnecessary back there."

After Kurumi exclaimed in frustration, giggling could be heard from a deserted location.

"Ara ara, they didn't notice it."

"How did that happen?"

"As expected, we cannot use such a roundabout method, would it be better if we had went in directly?"

Numerous Kurumis poked their heads out from the walls and floors, chiming their opinions one after the other.

"Silence, [Us]. I still have a lot more plans that can be used."

"Since you've said that, what should we do now?"

One of the clones asked with her head tilted to a side. Kurumi snorted, folding the flyer in her hands in half.

"Don't get distracted from our mission objective. More importantly, I can let Shidou-san realize the existence of this flyer with this method."



Saying that, Kurumi started to fold the flyer in a complicated manner.

"Hm—Hm—, Niku—kyuu—, Niku—kyuu—, Niku—Niku—kyuu—"

"What's with that song, seriously....."

It was probably due to being overly conscious of the cat, Tohka hummed the mysterious song that she had created on the way, Shidou who was walking alongside her forced out a weak smile.

At that moment.

"Hm?"

In the middle of the road, Shidou stopped walking, turning to look behind him.

For some reason, he felt as though something had just bumped into his back.

"Uu, is something the matter?"

"No, just now....."

Shidou looked around, his brow twitched upon glancing downwards.

"This....."

Saying that as he bent down, picking up the object that fell by his feet.

What fell there was, a paper plane that seemed to have been made out of a flyer.

It seems that the feeling before had been caused by this. Shidou did not see anyone around.....Could it have been a prank done by kids living nearby?

"Eh? This piece of paper....."

Shidou frowned in surprise. That paper plane did not seem to have been made from the advertisements from a newspaper, but one that has been printed from a household printer. The words "Please open it." had also been neatly written onto the wing.

"What a polite way to write."

Beads of sweat rolled down Shidou's face, just as he was prepared to follow the instruction and unfold the plane.....

"Hm? What's that?"

At this moment, Tohka who was beside him, looked at Shidou's hands excitedly.

"Hm? Aaah, this is a paper plane. Someone seemed to have thrown it to me."

"Paper plane? What is that?"

"Well, it's a plane made of paper like its namesake. If you throw it out like this then it'll fly."

"S-such a thing!"

Upon witnessing Shidou miming the action of throwing a paper plane, Tohka's eyes lit up, gingerly handing the cat over to Shidou .

"shidou , help me hold ths guy for a while."

"Eh? A-aah, of course....."

Shidou nodded, receiving the cat from Tohka. In exchange Tohka took the paper plane from Shidou's hands, exaggeratedly moving her arm to throw it into the sky.

"Fly!"

"Ah....."

It was already too late when Shidou gasped. Tohka's strength seemed to have went hand in hand with the wind, the paper plane soon disappeared far away just like that.

"Oooh, it's true! This is amazing shidou! It really flew just like shidou said!"

"Gah, hey....."

The plane had been thrown away even before its contents were read. Shidou frowned at the paper plane that was in the air.

Oh well, it could very well be some prank that has been thrown over. The words "Only an idiot would look" might have been inside. Shidou sighed as he came to that conclusion.

However, Tohka was sharp enough to notice Shidou's slight facial expressions, her shoulders shrank as she showed an apologetic expression.

"s-shidou.....Don't tell me, that was something that I should not have thrown.....? S-sorry, I'll go and get it immediately——"

"Aaah, that's not it, it's alright. It's my fault for doing the throwing action. Since it probably isn't anything important, you don't have to mind."

"But....."

"More importantly, shouldn't we get this fellow treated earlier.

Hm?"

Shidou smiled as he passed the cat over to her. Tohka's crestfallen look instantly brightened up, she used a confident expression to nod in reply to Shidou.

"TOH· KA-SA——N.....!"

Kurumi who had peeped out from the shadows of the wall, regretfully ground her teeth while furiously glaring at the backs of the departing Shidou and Tohka.

Understanding that it wasn't enough to attract attention just by simply sticking it to the wall, Kurumi formulated a plan to pass the flyer to Shidou in the form of a paper plane——she even wrote instructions on the paper plane just to be safe, in the end she had been foiled by Tohka again.

"Not once but twice.....! Does she hate me or something.....!?"

Kurumi grudgingly said, communication sounded out from her surroundings once more.

"About that, well, shouldn't she be?"

"Since you did cause that chaos earlier before, because you had targeted Shidou-san."

"Eh.....Don't tell me you never considered that you might be hated because of that?"

The clones' heads popped out from the shadows just like a whack-a-mole game as they gave their comments. Kurumi clicked her tongue in annoyance, smacking them on the head.

"Ow!"

"Kya!"

"Uuuh, that's too much."

The clones held their heads, looking at Kurumi with resentful gazes.

However, Kurumi paid no heed to them, grinding her teeth as she stared at Shidou and Tohka's backs.

"I——can't stand it any more. Originally I didn't wish to step in personally, but I can't give up now that things have gotten to this!"

"D-do we have a plan?"

One of the clones asked in astonishment. Kurumi glanced at her, silently opening her mouth.

"Since that flyer is already useless, then, our methods have to change as well.....!"

"A change in.....method?"

"——To put it simply, all I have to do is to get the cat to choose me over Shidou-san."

".....!?"

The instant Kurumi said that, all of the surrounding clones showed expressions of wariness.

"Don't.....don't tell me, you're going to use that?"

"How can it be, it's too dangerous! Even if it's for the cat, is it really necessary to go this far?"

"Please think it through once more! If you were to be seen, you would be showing that to Shidou-san!? You of all people should know, what that means don't you?"

As expected of Kurumi's clones who originated from the original, they were able to understand her intentions with that one line alone.

However, despite the clones' protests, Kurumi's decision did not waver in the slightest.

"Please keep quiet! This is already an issue of my personal pride! As long as there are any obstacles to my objective, no matter how small, I will not forgive them whoever they are!"

Kurumi cried out as such. The clones returned to the shadows upon hearing her declaration.

"Well then.....We'll arrive once we turn at that corner."

"Ooohh, isn't that great Nikukyuu? You won't feel pain soon."

Shidou used his finger to point out the corner in front of them, Tohka exaggeratedly nodded her head as she raised her voice. In response to her words, the cat began to mew.

However, at that moment, Tohka and the cat jumped as though they had been surprised by something, after that they started to look around at the same time.

"Hm? What's the matter?"

"Uuh.....Didn't you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

Saying that Shidou pricked his ears and listened closely, just as Tohka said, he could hear the cute mewling of a cat somewhere.

".....Hmm?"

Shidou frowned slightly due to an instinctual sense that something was amiss. This was not due to Shidou being well versed in cat language..... But he felt that there was a subtle tease in that call, as though it was trying to invite one to guess who was mewling.

At this moment.

"Ah——!"

Hearing Tohka's cry, Shidou saw the cat jump out of Tohka's arms, dragging its left hind leg and dashing towards the small alley.

"shidou, Nikukyuu!"

"Yeah, let's go after it, Tohka!"

"Mn!"

Shidou and Tohka, started to run after the cat.

Their opponent was an agile animal. One would normally find it difficult to catch up to it. However, it was a different case if the cat's hind leg had an injury. The distance between the cat and the two slowly, but surely——

"Got you!"

Just before entering the small alley, Tohka had caught the cat.

"Alright, I've caught her!"

"Oh! Well done Toh——"

Shidou who had arrived a moment slower than Tohka, his words trailed off mid-sentence.

The reason for that was extremely simple. This was because there was an unexpected scene that had unfolded before him due to the cat trying to enter the alley.





".....Ku-Kurumi?"

Shidou's voice was filled with confusion and shock as he cried out that name.

That's right. In the middle of the alley was a single girl. Kurumi. A classmate that had transferred into Shidou's class in the past——A girl that had been called "The most dangerous Spirit", killing humans by her own will.

That girl was currently on all fours onto the ground, Mewing, with a tone that could cause one to have goosebumps. It was natural to feel confused at this scene. Tohka reacted the same way as Shidou, her eyes widened as she stared at Kurumi.

".....Kya.....!"

A split second later, Kurumi seemed to have also realized Shidou and Tohka's presences. Her shoulders jumped in shock as she froze in place——she stood up and dusted her knees, pinching the edges of her skirt as she made an elegant bow.

"F-fufu, it's been a while, Shidou-san , Tohka-san."

Saying that, her lips curled upwards to form a crescent smile. Her face showed a stunning smile that could freeze one in place.....at least that was what she intended to do, for some reason, tiny beads of sweat could be glimpsed from her forehead.

"W-what are you doing....."

"....."

Upon being questioned by Shidou, Kurumi's smile immediately froze, she went speechless for an instant——

"G-gah....."

Rustling her hair in near-vexation, Kurumi made a snap with her fingers.

Instantly, the shadows that were swirling at her feet coiled around her body——forming an elegant dress that is entwined by blood and darkness. Astral Dress——The absolute armor that protects the Spirits.

"Wha——"

Kurumi who had entered battle mode, pointed at the cat within Tohka's arms.

"T-think what you like, please hand that cat over to me!"

"Ah, eh? The cat.....?"

Due to the sudden unreasonable demand, Shidou couldn't help but frown.

At this moment, from the surrounding shadows,

"Ah—, ah—"

"In the end, it turned out to be like this."

"It wouldn't have to be that embarrassing, if you had done this in the first place....."

Shidou seemed to hear such one-sided conversations take place.....Was it just a hallucination from being confused.

Shidou, failing to understand the current situation, showed a troubled expression. Tohka, on the other hand looked warily at Kurumi.

"Cat.....you said? Are you talking about Nikukyuu?"

"Yes. That's what I am talking about."

Kurumi seemed to have regained her voice as she affirmed the uneasy question raised by Tohka.

"I do not have the intention to fight with you two today. Just obediently hand it over and I promise that I will let you two go back peacefully."

"Stop joking! Who would hand it over to someone like you!"

Tohka cried out, her hands exerting more strength as though attempting to protecting the cat. Kurumi noticed that, pressing a finger to her lips, she showed a glamorous smile.

"Oh my, oh my, how brave of you. How~ever~, at your current strength, do you think you can stop me?"

"Kuh——"

Tohka took half a step back with a panicked expression.

In truth, Tohka should also be fully aware about the difference in combat ability between her and Kurumi. Even though she had faced off with Kurumi once before—but that was when Origami and Mana were there and they still suffered a crushing defeat. If a battle were to break out now, chances that Tohka and Shidou obtaining victory are slim.

Despite that, even though they were in such a perilous predicament, Shidou's attention was focused on another thing altogether.

"Kurumi....."

"Yes? What is it?"

"About that.....yeah. Why, do you want this cat?"

"....."

With that simple question raised by Shidou , Kurumi's shoulders jolted but her face still had that fearless smile.

That's right, it was this simple fact that raised uncertainty.

On first glance, it is hard to believe that this cat possesses any special powers. For a moment, Shidou was worried that Kurumi might use her [City of Devouring Time] to plunder the cat's time.....But that would be extremely cost ineffective on a small creature that has a significantly shorter life span compared to humans.

"That's....."

"That's?"

Kurumi stuttered as she attempted to say something, avoiding Shidou's eyes while tossing her hair to a side.

"That.....I'll leave it to your imaginations."

No matter what he does, an indirect answer was always given to him. Shidou frowned even harder in puzzlement.

As Kurumi gave such a reply, Tohka widened her eyes as though realizing something.

"D-don't tell me you.....intend to make meatballs from the meatballs from Nikukyuu's feet and eat them?"

"I will not! W-what horrible imagination do you have!"

Kurumi couldn't help but cry out.

".....T-then, what do you intend to do?"

Sweat formed on Shidou's face as he asked, Kurumi frowned with a troubled expression.

"A-anyway! Please hand that cat over to me! If you two wish to resist—I can't guarantee that you two will live!"

Saying that Kurumi raised her hands, a pair of guns flew into her hands. One was an ancient handgun while the other was a rifle that had a barrel longer than the former.

However, even so Tohka could not just hand over the cat just like that, she stared at Kurumi with a stern face.

"How can I——hand Nikukyuu.....over to a dangerous woman like you——!"

The same time she made her outburst, Tohka's body emitted a soft glow. Although Tohka's Spirit powers have been sealed by Shidou, however when her emotional state runs unstable, there would be a situation where her Spirit power would backflow.

At that moment.

Probably frightened from the mysterious glow and her cries, the cat that was in Tohka's arms jumped out and ran towards the main road.

"! Oh no——Nikukyuu!"

Tohka called out absently, hastily reaching out.

However——she didn't catch the cat. It had slipped through Tohka's fingers, dashing towards the direction of the road.

At the same time, a car was headed straight for the cat.

Shidou held his breath, his legs hit the floor before he could even think.

Grabbing the cat that ran onto the road, he held it in his arms in an attempt to protect the cat just as he was about to hit the ground. At this moment, the driver finally realized that something was amiss, the shrieking of the brakes pierced Shidou's eardrums.

"shidou!"

Following that he could hear Tohka's wail. But even if Tohka rushed over with her Astral Dress, chances of reaching him in time was slim. Shidou tensed up, bracing his entire body for the impact.

Shidou possessed an abnormal recovery rate. Although it would not reduce the pain, but it was likely that he would not die from just being hit by a car. Shidou braced himself and clenched his teeth.

But, then.

"Zafkiel<Emperor of Time>——Zayin[The Seventh Bullet]"

He seemed to have heard Kurumi's voice. Shidou was not hit by the car at all, he fell onto the floor just like that.

"Eh.....?"

Letting out a sound while in a daze, he stood up, noticing that the car had stopped in place just a few millimeters away from where Shidou was.

Not braked—but stopped.

That's right. The car that was about to ram into Shidou, had totally stopped in its tracks, as though it had been isolated from the flow of time. The body of the car that lurched forward due to braking, the distorted tires as well as the terrified face of the driver, had totally, stopped.

"T-this is....."

Mumbling to himself whilst in a daze. But Shidou recalled that such an unbelievable scene had happened before.

Zafkiel<Emperor of Time>—Zayin[The Seventh Bullet].Kurumi's Angel possesses, the power to stop time.

"Oh my oh my, why are you panicking?"

As though proving his thoughts, he could hear Kurumi's voice above him.

At the same time, Shidou felt that his collar had been grabbed, he was lightly placed onto the roadside.

"Wah.....!"

Due to the sudden release, he landed on his behind. In the next instant, the braking car that had its time stopped emitted a piercing screech, smoke came out from its tires, continuing to move forward for several metres—before finally coming to a stop.

The driver got out of the car in a panic, taking a good look around him, shaking his head in disbelief as he got back into his car and drove off.

"shidou! Are you alright!"

Tohka wailed as she ran over. Shidou shook his hand to indicate his lack of injuries.

"I'm sorry, this happened because I didn't pay attention ....."

"No, it's not Tohka. That aside, just now.....as I thought....."

Shidou frowned as he voiced out his suspicions, Tohka had the same expression on her face as she nodded.

"Yeah. It was unmistakable, that was definitely Kurumi's Angel."

"Did she.....save me? Just wha——"

Shidou looked troubled as he mumbled to himself. All of a sudden, Tohka yelled out while pointing at Shidou's chest.

"! Ah, s-shidou! Where's Nikukyuu!?"

"Eh? E-eh——?"

Shidou looked at his hands, his eyes widened.

The cat that was supposed to be in his arms had somehow disappeared. At this moment, as though in answer to the question, his ears could hear giggling from a distance.

Kurumi was standing there whilst in her Astral Dress. —In her arms, was the aforementioned calico cat.

"Ah.....! Kurumi, you——"

"Fufu, I have received the cat.——Well then, Shidou-san Tohka-san, I bid you two farewell."

Kurumi made a small bow while hugging the cat, she dove into the expanding shadows at her feet.

"Kuru——!"

Tohka went after her in haste——But it was too late. Just as Tohka was about to touch her, Kurumi's figure vanished entirely.

"Guh.....N-Nikukyuu———!"

The evening street, was filled with Tohka's anguished cry.

After that, Shidou and Tohka returned to their original plan of going to the shopping district for groceries.....But Tohka could not be cheered up.

Chances are highly likely that she was still concerned about the cat that Kurumi had taken away. Despite Shidou saying "Let's make Tohka's favourite food for dinner then." or "Let's go and buy your favourite soy bread.", Tohka merely gave a vague response as she glanced to the skies.

.....Truthfully speaking, things might get dangerous if this continues for too long. Shidou abided by Ratatoskr's instructions, ending the grocery shopping early, they were currently on the way home.

"Hey, Tohka. Please don't feel down anymore."

"......Mmn, I know. I'll be fine."

In response to Shidou's words, Tohka replied with a face that totally did not look like she was fine at all. Sweat beads rolled down Shidou's face, he frowned with a troubled expression.

"Nn——"

Of course, Shidou was concerned about that cat as well. In the end, Kurumi's objective remained unknown to him.

However, in contrast to such an issue, he remained much more worried about Tohka's mental state. Is there any way that could make her happy again.....

Suddenly,

"Ah.....!"

Shidou's mental train of thoughts were suddenly broken by Tohka's sudden yell.

"! What's the matter Tohka. Did something happen?"

Shidou raised his head in surprise due to the difference in Tohka's volume, he saw Tohka pointing in front of her with widened eyes.

In the direction Tohka had pointed at was a small girl, who was carrying a calico cat with a red collar.

"N-Nikukyuu!"



"Eh? It can't be——"

It can't be, but just as Shidou was about to say that, Tohka had already dashed off.

Stopping in front of that young girl, reaching out a hand to the cat that she was carrying, prodding the cat's pawpads.

"! I-I can't be mistaken! Nikukyuu!"

"Eh, ehh?"

Shidou's eyes narrowed in surprise, closely scrutinizing the cat's features——it was, very similar indeed.

"U-um.....Is something the matter?"

At this point, the little girl who was carrying the cat showed an uneasy expression. This was to be expected, it's not normal for an unfamiliar boy and girl to suddenly run over and start pressing a cat's pawpads.

"A-ahhh.....Sorry about that."

Shidou made a simple apology, before continuing.

"Umm.....Then, it might be a little weird to ask but, this cat, is it yours?"

Upon Shidou's question, the girl timidly lowered her head.

"Yes.....This is my cat."

"See, we've been mistaken——if you look closely, this cat, doesn't have any injuries."

Saying that, Shidou indicated at the cat's left hind foot.

That's right. differing from the previous cat, this one does not have any injuries on it's body at all. Although it looked similar, but it was definitely another cat.

"No! Impossible! This sensation is definitely Nikukyuu's!"

"Gah, hey....."

Just as Tohka was shaking her head in denial, the girl raised her eyebrows as though realizing something.

"Don't tell me.....Was Onee-chan looking for Mary too?"

"Mary?"

"It's this child's name. Actually.....she went missing a few days ago.....But just now, a pretty onee-chan found her for me."

"Eh.....?"

Shidou couldn't help but make a surprised gasp.

After that, he looked at the cat's left hind leg once more.

——That leg that seemed to have had its time rewound, erasing the wound from existence completely.

"......No, that's impossible.....could it?"

Shidou scratched his cheek as he softly mumbled to himself.